

## Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 046629

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: BRIEFING FOR LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER

1. CHARGE SHOULD DRAW ON FOLLOWING TO BRIEF FOREIGN  
MINISTER TAQLA ON SECRETARY'S FEBRUARY TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST  
AND UPCOMING MARCH TRIP:

A. SECRETARY'S LATEST VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST WAS ESSENTIALLY  
EXPLORATORY--TO FOLLOW-UP ON DIPLOMATIC CONSULTATIONS OF  
RECENT MONTHS WITH KEY MIDDLE EAST GOVERNMENTS AND, THROUGH  
DIRECT TALKS WITH LEADERS OF THOSE GOVERNMENTS, TO SEE  
WHETHER POSSIBILITY EXISTS TO NEGOTIATE FURTHER AGREEMENTS  
IN THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS TOWARD A MIDDLE EAST PEACE  
SETTLEMENT.

B. OUR CONCLUSION IS THAT SUCH A POSSIBILITY DOES IN  
FACT EXIST AND THAT PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENTS SECRETARY VISITED  
--EGYPT, SYRIA, JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND ISRAEL--WANT US  
TO CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS. SECRETARY THEREFORE PLANS TO  
RETURN TO AREA IN FIRST HALF OF MARCH FOR A MORE INTENSIVE  
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AND CONCRETE NEGOTIATING PROCESS.

C. WE FOUND GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH OUR VIEW THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE--WHICH WE

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AS THE FRAMEWORK AND FORUM FOR AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT--IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE THERE HAD FIRST BEEN ANOTHER CONCRETE STEP ON THE GROUND. IN THE ABSENCE OF THE MOMENTUM SUCH A STEP WOULD GENERATE, WE BELIEVE, A RETURN TO GENEVA WOULD LEAD TO ALMOST CERTAIN STALEMATE, WITH ALL THE FRUSTRATIONS AND DANGERS THAT WOULD INVOLVE.

D. THE MAIN ISSUES TO BE DEALT WITH ARE (1) TO RECONCILE EGYPT'S NEED FOR A SIGNIFICANT ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL, WITH ISRAEL'S NEED FOR RECIPROCAL POLITICAL UNDERTAKINGS BY EGYPT THAT WILL REASSURE ISRAELI OPINION THAT A FURTHER AGREEMENT REPRESENTS A GENUINE MOVE IN THE DIRECTION OF NONBELLIGERENCY AND PEACE; (2) TO DETERMINE HOW THE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE ADVANCED ON OTHER FRONTS, SYRIA IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE PEACE-MAKING PROCESS. THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IS NOT DESIGNED TO DIVIDE THE ARABS ONE FROM ANOTHER. THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS--FOR WHICH WE RECOGNIZE A SOLUTION MUST BE FOUND AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME--REMAINS PREMATURE SINCE THE PLO'S REFUSAL TO NEGOTIATE ON THE BASIS OF A RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST UNDERSTANDABLY MAKES IT AN UNACCEPTABLE NEGOTIATING PARTNER TO ISRAEL.

E. IN THE PERIOD BEFORE THE SECRETARY'S NEXT TRIP, WE HAVE ASKED THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED TO REFLECT HOW THESE ISSUES CAN BE MANAGED. MEANWHILE, WE ARE IN TOUCH WITH THE SOVIETS AS CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE TO COMPARE ASSESSMENTS OF THE SITUATION AND TO MAKE CLEAR OUR RECOGNITION THAT ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT WILL REQUIRE THE COOPERATION, SUPPORT AND POSSIBLE GUARANTEES OF BOTH OF US. THE SECRETARY'S MEETING IN GENEVA WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO WAS FOR THIS PURPOSE.

F. THERE ARE POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCES AT WORK WHICH INHIBIT FREEDOM OF ACTION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED. AT SAME TIME, A POWERFUL FACTOR FAVORING FURTHER PROGRESS  
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IN THE NEGOTIATIONS IS THE AWARENESS OF THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE AND OF PROLONGED STALEMATE, NOT ONLY FOR THE REGION BUT FOR THE WORLD. INGERSOLL

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